**TOP 5 Things Higher Education Representatives Working with Foster Youth**

**Need to Know About California’s Fostering Connections to Success Act (AB12)**

1. **Staying in Foster Care Works!** A study of 732 youth who exited foster care in the Midwest found that youth who had access to foster care until age 21 were:

* Three times more likely to complete one year of college
* More than two times more likely to obtain BA

1. **Young people enrolled in foster care can now get access to housing and other supports through the foster care system up to the age of 21. In some cases the youth may be able to receive payments directly. Where youth can live includes:**

* With an approved relative or an extended family member
* With foster parents or a non-related legal guardian
* In an apartment with or without roommates
* In a college dorm
* In transitional housing

1. **Who Qualifies:**

* Available to youth who are in foster care in an out-of-home placement on or after their 18th birthday any time after January 1, 2012.
* Must be willing to sign an agreement, meet with a social worker once a month and work on Transitional Independent Living Skills.
* Parenting and Pregnant youth are eligible however, youth who get married or join the military are not eligible.
* Youth who were under the supervision of juvenile probation in an out-of-home placement when they turn 18 may also qualify. These youth may be able to transfer their supervision to the child welfare system after completing the terms of their probation.
* Students can receive foster care benefits and still receive financial aid for college.
* Youth who entered a guardianship with a relative (“Kin-GAP”) after the age of 16 or who were adopted after 16 (or younger if the youth has a qualifying disability) may also be eligible for extended benefits.

1. **What’s Required – Youth must do one of the following*:***

* Enroll in high school or pursue a GED
* Enroll in college/vocational school at least half time
* Participate in a program/activity that removes barriers to employment (such as applying for college, job search activities, parenting or other life skills classes, volunteering, substance abuse treatment, etc.)
* Work at least 80 hours a month
* Be unable to do any of the above because of a verified medical or mental health condition

1. **Youth are able to re-enter after they have left the foster care system if they meet age requirements:**

* Youth can contact their prior social worker or juvenile probation officer for information.
* Youth can contact any county child welfare agency in California for assistance with re-entry (many have “1-800” hotline numbers for intake).
* Youth don’t need to be enrolled in school or working at the time of re-entry as long as they are willing to engage in one of the activities above once they’ve re-entered.